

Summary Points of Appendices 3, 4 and 5

Below is a summary of the main points of progress on the key issues highlighted through the Members' Survey, the Viewpoint and Staff Focus Groups. A number of common themes were raised in these sessions and are being addressed as part of recommendations 1 – 8.

Improving internal communications

Internal communications has been given a particular focus over the past 6 months and is becoming increasingly important in the current financial climate. One of the main vehicles for issuing information internally in a timely and accessible manner is Keeping You in Touch (KYIT).

KYIT is now produced as a weekly e-bulletin (KYIT) which is sent to all members of staff with electronic access. A word version is produced for those without electronic access and for people who, for example, are on maternity leave and wish to stay informed. The word version is also put onto the school extranet as schools do not have access to the intranet.

As such KYIT is proving to be a very effective medium with the number of hits on the intranet continuing to rise as well as the number of articles which are sent in across all departments to feature in future issues. Positive feedback has been received from staff, particularly around the fact that the information is completely up to date. The electronic version is also sent to Council Members for information.

Standard features will include staff 'joiners and leavers'; staff successes and long-service and simply recognising a 'job well done'. There will be a regular focus on different jobs within the Council in response to feedback received. Special paper versions of KYIT will be issued when there are important issues affecting all staff, particularly around the Value for Money Programme, with two issues produced to date – copies also go to members.

In an effort to reduce the volume of emails bombarding staff and members, better use is being made of the intranet and driving people to it through KYIT. To encourage this further the intranet is being completely rewritten and will be launched later in the year. It will have improved navigation, search facilities and a more contemporary look and feel. Full structure charts for all services will be included as a section on the intranet.

Messages from the Chief Executive to all members of staff are included in each paper version of KYIT and we have also posted a webcast of his presentation to managers on the intranet. We will be doing more of these webcasts in the future.

Setting the Standards presentations have now been put onto the intranet and highlighted in KYIT, meaning more staff are given the corporate messages in a timely manner.

Staff Suggestion & Feedback

A new corporate suggestion scheme has been launched. Suggestions can be submitted in a variety of ways. Whilst it has not been possible in light of the current financial climate to offer incentives, the best suggestions will be acknowledged at the annual customer excellence awards. There will be regular feedback on the scheme and how the suggestions have been taken forward in KYIT.

Clearer Information for Members

Policy briefings are issued on a regular basis, highlighting national legislation, regional issues, and how these affect Stockton. Monthly Members' Seminars have also been strengthened following evaluation.

Ensuring communications comes from all parts of the Council

A more proactive approach to identifying and sourcing positive news for use in all communications platforms (i.e. Press / Stockton News / Internet and internal communications), is being taken forward through regular communications team meetings with individual services. This will ensure that more regular communications are coming from all across the Council; not just the same departments. As part of this we are exploring the possibility of a weekly "Stockton What's On" Round-up that includes more ward-specific events and activities.